ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INSTITUTIONS REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1908-1909

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

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CITY OF BOSTON
PRINTING DEPARTMENT
1909

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FOR THE YEAR 1908–09.

City of Boston,
Institutions Registration Department.
Boston, February 10, 1909.

Hon. George A. Hibbard,
Mayor of the City of Boston:

Sir, — The twelfth annual report of the Institutions Registration Department for the year ending January 31, 1909, is herewith respectfully submitted.

During the past year the personnel of the department has not changed. Although a very perceptible increase has occurred in the various branches of the daily routine, no attempt has been made to increase the working force. At the present time there are employed in the office and for the maintenance of the transportation and ambulance service twelve persons, in addition to the registrar and the two permanent examining physicians.

The general scope of the work has not been broadened in any respect. While it might be desirable to do so, for instance in the direction of classifying and analyzing the accumulated material concerning the public wards of the city, the press of regular work does not permit it. The present office force, which has practically remained stationary since the department was first organized, is fully occupied with the fixed duties

imposed upon the department by law, as the sole admitting agency for dependent and defective persons to city and state institutions.

Both the number of applications received and the number of persons admitted or committed to institutions have been larger during the past year than at any time in the history of the department. As a matter of fact, the number finally distributed among institutions would have been even larger had certain institutions been capable or desirous of receiving all who wished to enter them. The department neglects no opportunity to furnish prompt aid to those entitled to it, but the opportunity for gaining immediate admittance to local institutions is not always at hand, particularly in the case of persons suffering from tuberculosis. For the present the local facilities for this class prove to be inadequate, as they have been in the past.

It has always been, and for some time is likely to be, a source of great perplexity to the department that there is no existing institution suitable to the needs of the group of applicants usually comprehended under the term of "rounders." It is made up mostly of men who through dissipation or general worthlessness have become unable to care for themselves, particularly during the stress of winter or when they are ill. The almshouse generally regards them as undesirable and troublesome. Although many of these persons belong distinctly to the vagrant class, the specific charge of vagrancy cannot as a rule be brought against them, and it is therefore not within the province of the department to seek their commitment to the State Farm. Still, in many instances, they are in dire need of institutional care, which cannot be denied them, and they are reluctantly sent to the almhouses. As has often been stated in these reports, it is to be hoped that in the near future some permanent and suitable provision can be made, preferably through the establishment of a farm colony for the reception of the incurable "rounder."

From year to year the number of persons who, for some cause or other, have been forced to seek the aid of the department has increased. Even under exceptionally favorable industrial conditions a marked decrease in the number of such persons is an unlikely occurrence. Experience in the past has taught that under all sorts of economic conditions an annual increase of public wards commensurate with the growth of the city's population is to be expected. During the past year it has been apparent that the recent industrial depression has caused an unusually large number of applicants, as the annexed table

of statistics shows. Also in the class whose dependence is not subject merely to lack of employment there has been a distinct increase.

Investigation of Settlements.

As the largest function of the department is to act as the admitting agency for adult dependents and defectives in Boston, it is the first duty of the department to receive applications for the admission of paupers and the commitment of the insane, dipsomaniacs, epileptics and other defectives, and to dispose of them after careful inquiry into the liability of the city for their support.

During the year ending January 31, 1909, the department investigated a total of 8,158 settlements, or 1,224 more than in the preceding year. This increase, as will presently be shown, bears a direct relation to the number of applications and the number of admissions and commitments to the various institutions, although in some years it may be that the investigations of settlements will show a decrease while there has been an actual growth in the number of persons admitted or committed to institutions.

Pursuing the policy of preceding years, the Children's Institutions Trustees continue to avail themselves of the services of the department in investigating the settlements of children. The number of such settlement cases investigated was 792, or an increase of 212 over the preceding year. This branch of the work has grown steadily in recent years.

In connection with applications it is very often necessary to make investigations outside of the office for the purpose of obtaining the necessary evidence and information upon which settlements can be determined; and to get other facts necessary for properly disposing of the applicants, their homes must be visited and their relatives or friends interviewed. It also very frequently occurs that the applicants are not in a physical condition making it possible for them to call at the office. In all, 1,509 investigations were made outside of the office, an increase of 104.

Exclusive of those relating to children, the number of settlements investigated will be seen to be considerably larger than the actual number of applications made to the department for various kinds of aid. The reason for this is that numerous dependent persons, for whose support the City of Boston may be liable, are sent to institutions from other cities and towns from whence the department is notified.

TOTAL ADMISSIONS AND COMMITMENTS.

There were in all 6,656 applications made to the department for different kinds of institutional care, an increase for the year of 915, as compared with the increase of 726 for the year 1907–08. These applications resulted in a total of 6,079 admissions and commitments to institutions, or 943 more than the preceding year, which again may be compared to the increase of 701 for the year 1907–08. It is shown below in which class of applicants this marked increase chiefly occurred. The department was obliged for a variety of reasons to refuse 49 applicants, which was less than half as many as last year. Applications were withdrawn in 528 cases, an increase of 24 for the year.

ADMISSIONS OF PAUPERS.

The persons who were admitted to almshouses formed 82.5 per cent of the total number distributed among institutions. There were in all 5,021 persons thus dealt with during the past year, or an increase over the preceding year of 897. It is thus apparent that paupers constitute by far the largest class with which the department is concerned. It should not be understood, however, that these numbers indicate a permanent class of dependents. Very many applicants are obliged to seek local and state institutions for medical treatment most of whom are subsequently discharged as more or less completely recovered. It will be noted that among those necessarily classified as paupers are included persons sent to the State Sanatorium at Rutland, which, of course, is not in any sense to be regarded as a pauper institution. The dependents under consideration were distributed among the state and city institutions as follows:

INSTITUTIONS.	Total.	Increase.	Decrease.
Boston Infirmary and Hospital at Long Island....	1,353	155	
Charlestown Infirmary.....	107	1	
State Sanatorium.....	15	.....	10
State Hospital at Tewksbury.....	3,546	751	
Total.....	5,021	897	10

The total increase of 897 admissions to institutions for paupers is unusually large and considerably greater than in 1907–08. The greatest increases was naturally in the num-

ber sent to the State Hospital in Tewksbury, but the admissions to the Boston Infirmary and Hospital at Long Island were also notably augmented. On the other hand, the admissions to the Charlestown Infirmary remained practically stationary, and a decrease of 10 is observed in the admissions to the State Sanatorium. As in former years, the figures indicate an increased pressure of applications from residents who are without a settlement in Boston, and therefore must be sent to the State Hospital. There is probably in Boston a growing class of persons who when they become dependent upon public aid find themselves without any legal settlement and thus are debarred from care at the pauper institutions of Boston. In times of industrial depression this condition is especially noticeable, as hard times always bring into Boston a large floating population, but it is also related to the large influx of foreigners who have not been here long enough to acquire a settlement.

The increase in the number of admissions to the Long Island Infirmary and Hospital signifies, among other things, that its facilities have been taxed to the limit. Very frequently beds cannot be provided in the hospital part for additional patients who are anxious to gain admission. This condition will doubtless continue until the new Consumptives' Hospital is able to care for a large number of patients. It is a source of no little hardship, especially in the case of persons whose condition is such that they should immediately be removed from their homes.

There were removed in the department ambulance during the year a total of 167 persons, a slight increase over the year previous. Mention is made of the fact to show the extent to which the department has to deal with the very sick who cannot be carried in an ordinary conveyance. Frequently the removal of persons must be postponed because they are too ill to risk the journey at the time application is made. As in former years, the department ambulance was placed at the disposal of private institutions for use in emergency cases.

Commitments of the Insane, Dipsomaniacs and Epileptics.

The two regular physicians of the department, with occasional outside assistance, made during the year 939 medical examinations of applicants for commitment, an increase of 43 over last year. As the result of these examinations a total of 1,058 persons were committed to various institutions, an increase for the year of 46.

Insane formed the largest class of persons committed, or 60

per cent of the total number sent to institutions, through legal process. There were in all 635 insane, who were distributed among hospitals as follows:

	Number.
Boston Insane Hospital	276
Danvers Insane Hospital	106
Westboro Insane Hospital	81
Taunton Insane Hospital	59
Worcester Insane Hospital	109
Bridgewater Insane Asylum	4
Total	635

The increase in the commitment of insane of 56 during the past year is slightly larger than usual, but does not call for special comment. The number of insane sent to institutions will always be found to vary from time to time, but a slight annual increase is to be expected and is in keeping with social conditions observed in other large centers.

Commitments to the Massachusetts Hospital for Epileptics number 39 for the year and show a decrease of 12.

In all, 258 commitments were made to the Observation Hospital at Deer Island. This is a decrease of 27 as compared with the year 1907–08, but is of no particular significance. This class of cases maintains a fairly constant level and shows no promise of a marked permanent reduction. Of the persons committed to the Deer Island Hospital, 124 men and 22 women suffered from delirium tremens; 77 men and 35 women were sent to the institution for medical observation in regard to their sanity. A considerable proportion of them were subsequently committed to public hospitals as insane.

In a number of its annual reports, the department has had occasion to deplore the lack of suitable provision which makes it necessary to send not only persons suffering from delirium tremens, but also persons who must be kept under medical observation until the question of their sanity can be determined, to a penal institution, no matter how admirable its hospital facilities may be. The long hoped for detention hospital, designed primarily for persons whose sanity is in doubt, has not yet materialized, but it is at least encouraging that a movement in that direction is kept alive. It is generally recognized as necessary to have such an institution as an adjunct to the hospital system of any large city. A detention hospital is required not only for those who may become suddenly unbalanced while away from home and among strangers, and for whom the cell of the police station now seems to be the only place of safekeeping, but chiefly for the class of insane who, until expert medical examination and com-

mitment can be made, are now confined in their homes. There is a very serious risk to all involved in this, and not merely a hardship. While one cannot have as great a pity for those who become insane through a direct fault of their own, it is true even of such that they should not be subjected to temporary confinement as prisoners. There certainly is no proper warrant for their detention for purposes of observation and temporary treatment in a hospital which is an integral part of the local House of Correction.

There has been a decided increase in the number of commitments of dipsomaniacs to the Foxboro State Hospital, which during the past year numbered 126 as against 97 during 1907–08. For several years previous there had been a general decline in the number of such commitments among residents of Boston. As has been pointed out in previous reports, this condition resulted in part from the rigid policy adopted in regard to the exclusion of unfit applicants, together with the refusal of this department to effect the commitment of any palpably incurable case, particularly of persons having a penal record. But the actual diminution of commitments also bore some relation to the conditions at the Foxboro Hospital. Since the hospital has been placed on a firmer footing, and under new management, the number of commitments from Boston appears to have taken an upward turn.

The adoption by the Commonwealth of a fixed and comprehensive policy for the institutional treatment of inebriates would be of the utmost importance to this department. Chiefly two classes of inebriates come under its view. The really hopeful cases, that is, the incipient drunkards who are most receptive to treatment, are comparatively rare among the applicants. But some apply who, under prolonged and systematic institutional care, would probably be found responsive. For such the Foxboro Hospital is the only available institution, and without its ministration the disposal of scores of applicants would become a most perplexing problem, not to mention the moral and economic burden they prove to their families and friends. It is quite as serious a problem what to do with the confirmed and incurable inebriates, who form a numerous contingent among the applicants. Left at large they are a menace to society. They are not fitted for a life in almshouses, where, among other things, the restraint is insufficient. To commit them to the State Farm requires criminal prosecution, which the evidence may not warrant. In short, no suitable institutional provision exists for this class, whose reclamation is in most instances hopeless. The burden of their more or less permanent segregation would,

however, not be as great as the one they at present entail. But this is a matter in which the Commonwealth, and not the individual municipality, must take the lead. The time seems ripe for the establishment of a permanent detention colony for this class.

Registration.

The department keeps up its efforts to put the large accumulation of important material relating to settlement histories and public wards into better shape for reference and preservation. During the entire existence of the department it has been one of its regular duties to collect and keep in convenient form all available information about persons who come into relations with the city as public charges, and to supply other departments and individuals who are entitled to it with proper facts concerning persons having been aided or applying for aid by the municipality. Intelligent disposition of applications demands a thorough knowledge of their past history, particularly in its relations to previous public aid. The inventory of the office, given on another page, furnishes some indication of the extent of the material that is kept on file for reference.

General Remarks.

Much of the service performed by the department in relation to different classes of unfortunates and of the work done for other departments cannot be expressed in numbers or exhibited in an annual report. The routine work of the office is made up of numerous details connected with the reception of applicants, their treatment according to needs and settlements, their transportation to institutions, interviews with relatives and friends, etc. In the performance of its various functions the department continues to be much hampered by inadequate facilities. In almost every report it has been emphasized that the receiving rooms at the disposal of the department always have been and remain not only uninviting but unsanitary and scarcely habitable in cold weather. Yet in such a place people in different stages of disease are necessarily congregated and very often remain for hours. Applicants suffering from some communicable disease are by no means rare; they are a menace to those who must come in close contact with them, and to some extent to the general public.

The lack of privacy in the main office, which is often crowded with applicants of every condition and degree, has also repeatedly been commented upon. It is a distinct hardship to those who make application for relatives or friends, and are

often obliged to disclose painful family histories, that they cannot do so in the utmost privacy. The work of the office is of such a nature that it should not be performed in an office which is simply a thoroughfare used daily by scores of persons who have no business with the department.

FINANCIAL.

The total amount of the annual appropriation was $20,000. In order to enable the department to meet its bills, a transfer was later on made so that the total amount afforded the department was $23,279.82, which amount was spent and makes the total expenditures $78.60 less than for the year 1907–08. The items of expense are given on another page. For a number of years the expenditures of the department have varied little, always being in round numbers about $23,400. This year the department has sought an appropriation of $23,500. It has been demonstrated during a considerable period of years that, as presently constituted, it can do its allotted work and keep within an allowance of $23,500, but that a smaller amount is insufficient.

Very respectfully,

WILLIAM P. FOWLER,
Institutions Registrar.

Investigation of Settlements, etc.; Medical Examinations and Commitments of Insane, Epileptics and Dipsomaniacs; Admissions to Almshouses, 1908-1909.

During the Week Ending.	Number of Investigations.	Number of Outside Investigations on Application for Admission.	Number of Investigations on Application for Admission of Children.	Number of Applications Withdrawn.	Number of Applications Refused.	Number of Medical Examinations.	Admissions to Almhouses.					Commitments of the Insane.										Grand Totals.	
							State Hospital, Tewksbury.	Almshouse, Long Island.	Almshouse, Charlestown.	State Sanatorium.	Total.	Deer Island Hospital.	Boston State Hospital.	Danvers Insane Hospital.	Westboro Insane Hospital.	Taunton Insane Hospital.	Worcester Insane Hospital.	Bridgewater Insane Asylum.	Foxboro State Hospital.	Massachusetts Hospital, Epileptics.	Total.	Admissions and Commitments.	Settlements Investigated.
1908.																							
February 1	12	1	2	1	...	1	8	...	1	...	9	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	2	11	26
8	138	31	14	11	2	10	78	28	1	1	108	2	10	3	...	...	1	...	...	1	17	125	162
15	126	27	11	12	...	15	69	26	1	1	97	4	2	...	8	...	1	...	2	...	17	114	149
22	135	22	21	11	4	20	79	17	1	1	98	1	6	1	12	...	...	...	1	1	22	120	162
29	128	17	14	25	2	14	65	14	1	...	80	4	2	...	8	...	...	...	4	3	21	101	159
March 7	144	23	19	10	1	24	84	21	1	1	107	4	6	...	5	...	4	...	4	3	26	133	173
14	120	24	10	6	1	12	73	22	1	...	96	4	4	...	...	...	5	...	3	1	17	113	141
21	119	21	10	7	...	22	68	20	1	...	89	5	8	...	...	...	7	...	1	2	23	112	142
28	116	19	17	9	2	20	69	13	4	1	87	5	3	1	4	...	3	...	2	...	18	105	154
April 4	127	27	14	5	1	21	66	22	4	...	92	8	7	...	3	5	3	...	2	1	29	121	151
11	144	24	11	9	...	23	84	23	1	...	108	6	5	...	4	8	1	...	3	...	27	135	167
18	112	15	16	8	1	21	63	14	...	1	78	9	6	1	1	7	...	...	...	1	25	103	142
25	110	22	15	11	1	19	55	20	1	...	76	2	7	1	4	7	...	...	1	...	22	98	137
May 2	115	22	21	10	1	10	71	20	1	1	93	1	3	...	...	...	3	1	3	...	11	104	151
9	186	39	14	13	...	25	113	31	8	1	153	6	6	...	1	...	3	...	4	...	20	173	206
16	132	34	25	9	...	8	78	32	2	...	112	3	4	...	1	...	1	...	...	2	11	123	168
23	139	23	26	10	...	14	81	22	1	2	106	2	7	...	2	1	7	...	4	...	23	129	181
30	96	25	26	6	1	9	50	21	3	...	74	2	4	1	2	...	...	...	5	1	15	89	152
June 6	123	32	21	13	1	25	52	22	9	1	84	7	9	6	...	...	...	...	3	...	25	109	157
13	158	34	19	13	1	19	81	29	4	...	114	9	6	9	3	...	...	...	2	1	30	144	191
20	120	36	20	10	2	24	49	32	2	...	83	11	5	6	1	...	...	...	2	...	25	108	161
27	152	41	35	11	...	20	79	33	8	...	120	6	4	2	2	...	5	...	2	...	21	141	203

July	4	110	24	26	9	....	16	64	22	2	1	89	5	2	....	....	....	5	....	....	....	12	101	147
	11	123	30	20	18	....	22	47	30	....	....	77	7	11	....	....	....	9	....	....	1	28	105	161
	18	127	30	21	11	1	19	67	27	2	1	97	6	4	1	1	....	2	....	2	2	18	115	155
	25	137	37	24	17	1	27	64	31	5	....	100	7	6	4	1	....	....	....	1	....	19	119	171
August	1	135	35	17	10	1	24	63	33	1	....	97	6	8	9	1	....	....	....	3	....	27	124	162
	8	126	34	12	8	1	17	66	28	5	....	99	7	2	6	....	....	....	....	3	....	18	117	145
	15	148	27	15	10	....	20	86	26	1	....	113	3	5	10	2	....	....	....	5	....	25	138	182
	22	120	27	15	8	....	17	67	24	3	1	95	5	3	....	2	....	3	1	2	1	17	112	154
	29	120	32	16	8	3	13	62	29	....	1	92	2	9	....	....	....	2	....	4	....	17	109	143
September	5	107	17	15	14	....	16	57	17	....	....	74	2	8	1	....	....	7	....	....	1	19	93	134
	12	89	18	10	8	....	22	44	16	2	....	62	7	4	....	....	....	7	....	1	....	19	81	114
	19	95	25	3	6	....	21	36	24	1	....	61	7	8	8	....	....	....	....	2	1	28	89	106
	26	103	37	7	12	2	18	37	34	1	....	72	2	4	9	....	....	....	....	2	....	17	89	122
October	3	146	38	16	17	....	20	69	37	1	....	107	8	2	6	1	....	1	....	2	2	22	129	182
	10	128	35	14	6	....	21	67	35	....	....	102	3	8	5	1	....	....	....	3	....	20	122	153
	17	129	37	7	9	....	24	56	32	5	....	93	4	8	....	1	....	8	....	4	2	27	120	146
	24	128	36	11	10	1	16	65	32	3	....	100	5	2	....	....	....	5	....	3	2	17	117	162
	31	111	25	10	10	2	17	56	19	4	....	79	5	3	....	1	....	4	....	6	1	20	99	135
November	7	125	28	10	9	....	17	69	28	....	....	97	7	2	....	2	....	7	....	1	....	19	116	142
	14	131	35	14	11	3	13	70	32	....	....	102	2	6	....	....	3	1	....	1	2	15	117	161
	21	112	31	8	7	1	13	60	29	1	....	90	5	2	....	....	2	....	....	5	....	14	104	133
	28	121	20	9	14	1	19	62	18	1	....	81	6	7	....	1	6	....	2	3	....	25	106	141
December	5	134	31	15	7	....	14	78	29	2	....	109	6	4	....	1	4	....	....	3	....	18	127	167
	12	140	33	14	11	....	13	84	33	....	....	117	4	3	3	....	....	....	....	1	1	12	129	171
	19	151	39	17	5	1	18	92	34	4	....	130	4	5	3	....	2	....	....	....	1	15	145	179
	26	97	16	12	7	....	15	56	16	....	....	72	4	5	2	2	....	....	....	4	1	18	90	122
1909.																								
January	2	174	35	6	11	....	30	91	35	....	....	126	11	10	8	....	....	1	....	5	2	37	163	193
	9	153	39	14	11	2	15	88	35	2	....	125	4	6	....	....	2	....	....	2	1	15	140	183
	16	151	38	11	11	....	14	83	36	2	....	121	5	3	....	3	2	....	....	5	1	19	140	171
	23	105	30	12	6	6	17	54	24	....	....	78	4	3	....	....	6	1	....	1	....	15	93	137
	30	128	31	10	7	2	15	71	26	3	....	100	4	8	....	....	4	....	....	3	....	19	119	149
		6,656	1,509	792	528	49	939	3,546	1,353	107	15	5,021	258	276	106	81	59	109	4	126	39	1,058	6,079	8,158

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR THE YEAR.

Salaries	$16,299 80
Medical attendance	3,162 00
Transportation	1,561 33
Horse keeping	1,582 45
Printing	193 51
Office expenses	133 25
Postage	112 50
Telephone	133 01
Food	65 12
Stationery	36 85
	$23,279 82

INVENTORY OF PROPERTY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

Furniture, etc., Office, Room 2.

1 stationery bookcase.
1 revolving bookcase.
1 counter with drawers.
3 roll top desks.
1 typewriter desk.
1 accountant's desk.
2 typewriters.
1 letter press and cabinet.
1 telephone and sound proof booth for same.
1 clothes cabinet, containing five lockers.
10 cabinets for settlement histories, correspondence, cards, etc.
20 chairs.

Furniture, etc., Examining Physicians' Office.

1 roll top desk.
9 chairs.
1 bookcase.
1 lounge.
1 mirror.
2 oilcloths.
28 volumes medical records.

Furniture, etc., Basement.

1 large table.
4 small tables.
3 settees.
16 chairs.
2 clothes closets.
1 medicine closet.
2 cabinets.
1 blanket chest.
1 rubber mattress and pillow.
1 hair mattress and pillow.
2 iron beds.

Transportation.

1 carriage.
2 horses for same.
2 double harnesses.
3 stable blankets.
3 street blankets.
1 ambulance.
1 horse for ambulance.
1 single harness.
2 stretchers.
2 mattresses for stretchers.
6 blankets for stretchers.
2 robes.
2 whips.

RECORDS.

Miscellaneous volumes and cards, containing records of admissions to almshouses and other institutions.

Five account books (one bill book, one journal, one ledger, one expenditure book and one pay roll).

Two volumes records Overseers of the Poor.

About 71,000 settlement histories (written).

Miscellaneous volumes, such as Boston Directories, Acts and Resolves, tax books, settlement records, and reports of various kinds.

Four thousand large cards (new).

Forty thousand large cards, containing records of persons in institutions.

About 6,000 history blanks.

About 7,000 blank index cards.

About 900 miscellaneous blanks for commitment of insane and inebriates.

Miscellaneous office stationery.

ALLIED PRINTING TRADES UNION LABEL COUNCIL BOSTON MASS 21